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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 1399th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on 4 March 1992, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. LOHIA (Papua New Guinea)

- Organization of work
- Seminar away from Headquarters envisaged under the Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism
- Request for participation in the Working Group of the Special Committee

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: At its previous meeting, the Special Committee agreed to maintain the newly-formed Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance. With regard to its membership, I wish to inform members that the necessary consultations have now been concluded. As no indications to the contrary have been received, the membership of the Subcommittee will therefore consist of all the members of the Special Committee.

Consultations have also been concluded with regard to the chairmanship of the Subcommittee, and I wish to inform members that the Deputy Permanent Representative of Tunisia, Ambassador Amor Ardhaoui, has agreed to serve as its Chairman. In the absence of any other indications, I shall take it that the Committee so agrees.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to extend my warm congratulations to Ambassador Ardhaoui on his unanimous election, and I look forward to working with him in close cooperation.

With respect to the election of the Rapporteur, as the necessary consultations have not yet been concluded, the Committee will postpone it to a future meeting.

As agreed to at our previous meeting, the Committee decided to request the Subcommittee to meet between March and June to complete consideration of the items allocated for its review and report.

In order to utilize conference servicing to its fullest, I would request the Chairman of the Subcommittee to schedule meetings, as far as possible, only when a sufficient number of items or speakers will ensure full

(The Chairman)

utilization of the time allotted and also with a view to minimizing the wastage of conference resources resulting from the cancellation of meetings. I would also request the Chairman to continue the practice of holding extensive consultations and informal meetings whenever possible, with a view to reducing the number of formal meetings to a minimum.

As members will recall, on the proposal of the Chairman, the Committee at its previous meeting decided in principle to establish an open-ended working group, with the responsibility for making recommendations on how to improve further the efficiency of the Committee's work in the light of recent events and bearing in mind all suggestions made in the Fourth Committee and the General Assembly during the forty-sixth session. It was the Committee's understanding that the group's mandate would be further considered at its next meeting.

(The Chairman)

I wish to inform members that the Bureau of the Committee has held consultations in that regard and has decided to recommend to the Committee that the open-ended working group should be entrusted with all matters relating to rationalization and revitalization of the Committee.

With respect to the terms of reference, I should like to put it to members that the Special Committee may wish to decide that any member of the Committee as well as any other State Member of the Organizations could participate in the deliberations of the working group. Administering Powers in particular, as well as representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories, would be encouraged to participate.

The mandate of the working group could be to review issues such as: the revitalization of the Special Committee in conformity with the objectives set forth by the General Assembly in its Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism; the streamlining and consolidation of resolutions as well as of other documents issued by the Special Committee; a review of the language of a number of the Committee's resolutions, such as its resolutions on the activities of foreign economic interests in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, on the military arrangements in those Territories and on the implementation by the specialized agencies of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples; the question of "name-calling"; the question of apartheid and whether it falls within the mandate of the Committee; review of the method of work of the Committee, its agenda and its list of Territories in connection with the ongoing reform of the United Nations; and the cooperation of the administering Powers, and in that connection how best to secure their full participation in

(The Chairman)

the work of the Committee, how to restore the practice of regular visiting missions, to which the Committee attaches the highest importance as a means to obtain first-hand information on the situation in the Non-Self-Governing and other Territories under the purview of the Committee, how to ensure that the administering Powers provide the Committee with regular, timely and up-to-date information on the Territories under their administration, in accordance with Article 73 e of the Charter, and the related issue of how to obtain a larger participation in the work of the Committee by representatives of the Non-Self Governing and other Territories under the purview of the Committee.

Are there any comments on the terms of reference I have just read out?

Mr. MORENO FERNANDEZ (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): At present I have no specific comments, Sir, but I think it would be useful for members of the Committee if your ideas on the mandate of the open-ended working group could be distributed to members of the Committee in written form. That would help us in our analysis and consideration of those ideas, which I consider to be comprehensive and all-encompassing.

The CHAIRMAN: I believe the request by the representative of Cuba is in order; I shall ask the Secretary of the Committee to ensure that the proposed mandate of the open-ended working group is circulated in writing among members.

Mr. ARDHAOUI (Tunisia) (interpretation from French): Earlier, Mr. Chairman, you stated that the representative of Tunisia had agreed to chair the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance. Indeed, it is not a question of "agreeing"; the delegation of Tunisia is honoured that the Committee chose it to chair the Subcommittee. I

(Mr. Ardhaoui, Tunisia)

thank all members for their renewed confidence: Tunisia served as Chairman of the former subcommittee and is once again entrusted with that post. My delegation will always be available to you, Mr. Chairman, and will spare no effort to carry out the task entrusted to it. It is my hope that its work will meet with the approval of all members.

The CHAIRMAN: I am quite sure the Committee has full confidence that the representative of Tunisia, his Government and his delegation will continue to provide the assistance they have for some time made available to the Committee. As Chairman of the Fourth Committee I had the opportunity to visit Tunisia during the Special Committee's meetings away from Headquarters; the history to which I bore witness when I was there shows that Tunisia is in the best of positions to help us with decolonization issues.

Mr. DIARRA (Mali) (interpretation from French): Since this is the first time I have spoken in the Committee this year, let me congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Special Committee for its 1992 session. My delegation believes that this reflects your country's commitment to the cause of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. We wish also to congratulate the other newly-elected Committee officers.

Moreover, we congratulate the representative of Tunisia on his election to the chairmanship of the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance, a post the delegation of Tunisia has been filling for a number of years. We are convinced he will carry out his functions with great success.

Mr. Chairman, in the terms of reference you laid out for the open-ended working group, you developed at length the section relating to rationalization. But with respect to the revitalization of the work of the

(Mr. Diarra, Mali)

Special Committee, you limited yourself to proposing that this be done in conformity with the objectives set forth in the General Assembly's Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. This is not as precise as the other terms of reference. Could the Chairman explain why this is so, or expand on that aspect of the terms of reference?

The CHAIRMAN: I would respond by saying that the open-ended working group has an open-ended agenda: that means that all questions are open for discussion. But in order to provide some guidance I tried to itemize some of the issues that have been considered and are still under consideration. However, Committee members are free to add whatever they wish to add to the terms of reference of the open-ended working group.

(The Chairman)

I suggest that, if there is a desire to elaborate the first part of the proposal, suggestions should be submitted and the proposal I have read out can be elaborated as it appears before the Committee.

Mr. DIARRA (Mali) (interpretation from French): I am speaking again in order to say that I am fully satisfied with your attempt, Mr. Chairman, to provide a solution to the question I have just raised. Therefore, I would suggest that we defer adopting this working paper and that, as was suggested by the representative of Cuba, we distribute the text so that delegations can have time to reflect on it and to make their suggestions.

The CHAIRMAN: The paper will be made available to the members in due course. The Secretariat is not able to do that at this time.

Do I understand that there is a wish for the matter to be postponed, or should a decision be taken?

Mr. MORENO FERNANDEZ (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that my initial statement and that of our colleague from Mali were sufficiently clear in this respect. We believe that before we take a decision it would be correct and only right for the members of the Committee of 24 to have the proposals you made put in writing.

In my delegation's view, the proposals are comprehensive and all-encompassing. But, in any event, we would like to see them in writing, so that we might have some time to examine and consider them, and to put forward our own, as the representative of Mali has said, if we deem it appropriate. Hence, it seems to me that we should not rush to take a decision today, but rather that some time should be made available to the delegations to allow them to study the document with all due care.

The CHAIRMAN: May I take it, then, that it is the Committee's wish to defer this matter to a later date?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like to request the Secretariat to ensure that members of the Committee receive the proposed terms of reference or the mandate for the open-ended working group some time today or as early as possible.

SEMINAR AWAY FROM HEADQUARTERS ENVISAGED UNDER THE PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

The CHAIRMAN: As I informed the Committee at its previous meeting, I have held consultations with several Caribbean countries in connection with the venue of the seminar to be held away from Headquarters as envisaged under the Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. I am happy to inform members that Grenada has agreed to host the seminar during the second half of June. At this stage, I wish to express the Committee's appreciation to Ambassador Eugene Pursoo of Grenada for the efforts he has made in regard to this offer, and through him to the Government of Grenada. I wish also to express the Committee's appreciation to the other States of the Caribbean Community which had expressed their willingness to host this seminar.

If I hear no comment, I shall take it that the Committee accepts the offer of the Government of Grenada and inform the Government of Grenada accordingly.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall request the Secretariat to prepare suggestions regarding the topics that may be discussed at that seminar. The list of the Secretariat suggestions will be forwarded to the open-ended working group for consideration and recommendation to the Committee.

(The Chairman)

If I hear no objection, I shall consider that the Committee agrees to follow that procedure.

It was so decided.

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE WORKING GROUP OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to inform members of the Committee that I have received a communication, dated 11 February 1992, from the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago, requesting that it be invited to participate in the Working Group of the Special Committee. The Working Group consists at present of all the officers of the Committee and the Subcommittee as well as the delegations of the Congo, Fiji and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

If I hear no comment, may I take it that the Committee is in agreement to the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago joining the Working Group of the Committee?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: The next meeting of the Committee will be announced in the Journal.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.